

# Legislative Fiscal Bureau

## Fiscal Note

---

SF 390 – Local Government Streamlining (LSB 1742 SV)

Analyst: Mary Beth Mellick (Phone: (515) 281-8223) (marybeth.mellick@legis.state.ia.us)

Fiscal Note Version – New

Requestor – Representative Robert Hogg

---

### **Description**

Senate File 390 provides several changes to alternative forms of city and county governments, including but not limited to the following:

- Provides that the Legislative Service Bureau will draw a redistricting plan if a county with a population of 180,000 or more adopts a City-County Consolidation form of government or a Community Commonwealth form of government.
- Allows a City-County Consolidation Charter Commission to provide for a combined government structure of a county and one or more participating cities. Under current law, a county and participating cities may merge into a single unit of local government. Current law still applies under the proposed legislation. Either form of government would allow the county and participating cities to retain a separate debt limitation.
- Provides that a proposed charter for an alternative form of government may be submitted at a general election or special election held on the same day as a regular city election. Current law provides that a proposed charter is submitted at a general election only.
- Provides that each city and county participating in a City-County Consolidation Charter process will pay expenses of the City-County Consolidation Charter Commission. Under current law, 100.0% of the expenses are paid from the county General Fund, or from any combination of public or private funds available for that purpose. Under the proposed law, each city's share will be based on the ratio that the population of the city bears to the total population of the county; each county's share will be based on the ratio that the population of the unincorporated area of the county bears to the total population of the county.
- Current law provides that if more than 50.0% of a city's population resides in a county creating a City-County Consolidation Charter Commission, the city will be included on the Commission. The proposed legislation provides for a city's inclusion, even if the city's population falls below the 50.0% threshold at a later date.
- Provides that following adoption of a City-County Consolidation Charter, the Charter may be amended at a general or special election.
- If a City-County Consolidation Charter is challenged in District Court, the Court is to expedite its review and determination of the challenge.
- If a Charter Commission for an alternative form of government recommends an alternative form of government, the final report submitted to the County Board of Supervisors will include a statement of whether the elected officers will be elected on a partisan or nonpartisan basis.
- Creates a Local Government Organization Review Committee. If the Committee recommends an alternative form of government, the recommendation will state whether the elected officers will be elected on a partisan or nonpartisan basis.
- Expenses of the Local Government Organization Review Committee will be paid from the General Fund of the county or from any combination of public or private funds available for that purpose.

- Provides that the option to establish a Local Government Organization Review Committee does not apply to a county in which a Charter Commission has been created and is operating as of July 1, 2003.

### **Assumptions**

1. Under current law, registered voters in unincorporated areas may vote in countywide elections or school board elections. Such voters cannot vote in city elections.
2. Under Senate File 390, if the City-County Consolidation election is held at a special election on the same day as a regular city election, voters in unincorporated areas would need to be included in the election. The cost of including such voters is unknown. If Polk County held a special election on the same day as a regular city election, the following additional costs would be incurred for including unincorporated areas:
  - a. Hiring of additional poll workers.
  - b. Renting space.
  - c. Activating phone lines.
  - d. Separate ballots would be printed for:
    - i. Residents that live in a different county, but within incorporated city boundaries.
    - ii. Residents that live in an unincorporated area.
  - e. Additional programming costs would be incurred to ensure that each voter is issued the correct ballot.
  - f. Special training for poll workers.
3. Under current law, typical election costs in Polk County are as follows:
  - a. General countywide election: \$240,000.
  - b. Special countywide election: \$200,000.
  - c. Regular city election: \$130,000.
4. In Jasper County, the cost of a general election is approximately \$20,000, and the cost of a special election is approximately \$15,000. These costs do not include adding unincorporated areas.
5. The costs to cities for payment of expenses of the City-County Consolidation Charter Commission are unknown.
6. The costs to counties for payment of expenses of the Local Government Organization Review Committee are unknown.
7. Under SF 390, additional poll workers would be hired for city polling areas.

### **Fiscal Impact**

#### **State General Fund Judicial Branch**

The fiscal impact of Senate File 390 to the Judicial Branch is expected to be minimal.

#### **Legislative Service Bureau**

The costs associated with the Legislative Service Bureau drawing a redistricting plan are expected to be minimal.

#### **Cities' General Fund**

For cities participating in a City-County Consolidation Charter Commission, costs would include payment of expenses incurred by the Commission. The costs would be shared with the county participating in the Consolidation Charter. Due to insufficient information, the fiscal impact of SF 390 to cities cannot be determined.

## **Counties' General Fund**

### ***Costs Associated with Payment of Commission Expenses***

For counties participating in a City-County Consolidation Charter Commission, costs would include payment of expenses incurred by the Commission. The costs would be shared with the cities participating in the Consolidation Charter. Due to insufficient information, the fiscal impact of SF 390 to counties cannot be determined.

### ***Costs Associated with Special Elections***

Under current law, a City-County Consolidation election is held at a general election. Under SF 390, such an election may be held at a general election or at a special election held on the same day as a regular city election. It is unknown what counties would hold a general election or special election on the same day as a regular city election; therefore, the estimated fiscal impact associated with holding these special elections by counties cannot be determined. The cost of adding unincorporated areas is also unknown.

The Polk County Auditor estimates SF 390 would result in increased costs of \$70,000. This estimate includes adding unincorporated areas and additional poll workers at city polling areas. It is unknown if costs would be paid for by the City of Des Moines or Polk County. A comparison of costs under current law compared to the proposal is as follows:

<u>Current Law</u>	<u>Proposed Law</u>	
Regular City Election	Special Election/ Regular City Election	<u>Difference</u>
<u>\$ 130,000</u>	<u>\$ 200,000</u>	<u>\$ 70,000</u>

### ***Costs Associated with the Local Government Organization Review Committee***

The costs associated with payment of expenses for the Local Government Organization Review Committee are unknown due to insufficient information. Expenses are expected to be minimal, however.

### **Sources**

Iowa State Association of Counties  
Iowa League of Cities  
Jasper County Auditor's Office  
Judicial Branch  
Legislative Service Bureau  
Polk County Auditor  
Secretary of State's Office

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/ Dennis C Prouty

April 2, 2003

---

The fiscal note and correctional impact statement for this bill was prepared pursuant to Joint Rule 17 and pursuant to Section 2.56, Code of Iowa. Data used in developing this fiscal note and correctional impact statement are available from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau to members of the Legislature upon request.

---